



DEPARTMENT OF STATE INSTRUCTION
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FOR DC USE ONLY

NO.: CA - 1575, August 15, 1958

SUBJECT: 3" x 5" Visa Card File

TO: All American Diplomatic and Consular Posts

Through extensive study, as well as testing in connection with the revised visa procedures which are being developed, the Department has determined that all visa records and indexes which are 3" x 5" in size should be consolidated into a single file arranged alphabetically by name. Effective immediately, all posts are directed to carry out this consolidation in accordance with the instructions contained herein.

This system for the maintenance of visa card records, and the procedures for implementing it, will (a) provide instructions for weeding out and destroying obsolete lookout and refusal cards, obsolete cards on lost foreign passports and old indexes to issued visas; (b) provide a marking system to facilitate future screening and disposal of cards; (c) require searching in a single file, rather than in several as is the case in many posts; (d) establish basic guide lines for the physical maintenance of the card files; (e) establish uniformity throughout the Foreign Service; and (f) improve the general efficiency of the visa operation.

A. Contents of File. The consolidated 3 x 5 visa card file shall consist of the following. The express permission of the Department shall be sought before any other cards are included. Permission shall be sought by operations memorandum headed: "Records Management". A copy of each such request shall be sent separately in an envelope marked: "Visa Office, Operations and Procedures Branch".

1. Lookout and refusal cards pertaining to applicants in, or natives of, the country or area on which the post is located.
2. Indexes to issued, transferred and abandoned immigrant visa cases.
3. Indexes to issued nonimmigrant visas prior to use of revised Form FS-257 (June 1957).

4. Issued

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- ### g. Refusals

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- g. Refusals under 212(a) 23
 - h. Refusals under 212(a) 27
 - i. Refusals under 212(a) 28
 - j. Refusals under 212(a) 29
 - k. Refusals on basis of Act of October 16, 1918
 - l. Cards which pertain to individuals who have claimed exemption from United States military service
 - m. Cards which serve as references to confidential card files the post may maintain
 - n. Cards serving as references to confidential visa correspondence from other posts or the Department, 1948 to present
 - o. Cards on narcotic smugglers
 - p. Cards on persons convicted of criminal theft
 - q. Notices to alert local immigration and police authorities
 - r. Form I-191, Application for Border Crossing Card.
2. Cards to be destroyed
- a. Cards on lost foreign passports (prior to July 1, 1953)
 - b. Lookout notices (red cards) if they pertain to deportations and not advisory opinions
 - c. Deportation cards pertaining to nationals of other countries than the host country except where an individual is known to reside in the host country.
 - d. Refusal cards from posts other than those in local country except those from neighboring consulates in areas where there is intensive regional travel.
 - e. Cards on mentally and physically defective individuals (dated prior to July 1, 1956)
 - f. Cards on

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- f. Cards on individuals appearing on crew control lists issued during the 1940's
- g. Refusals on basis of LPC (prior to July 1, 1956)
- h. Refusals on basis of ACL
- i. Refusals on basis of illiteracy (prior to July 1, 1956)
- j. Refusals on basis of no fixed domicile (prior to July 1, 1956)
- k. Refusals on basis of not being bona fide visitor (prior to July 1, 1956)
- l. Refusals made on basis of insufficient time for clearances (prior to July 1, 1956)
- m. Refusals made on basis of insufficient documentation (prior to July 1, 1956)
- n. Recalls
- o. Refusal cards on individuals to whom visas were subsequently issued

This instruction constitutes the necessary authority for destruction of the cards screened from the lookout and refusal card file.

Before refilling those types of cards which are dated subsequent to the dates given under C2 above (items a, e, g, i-m), the cards shall be stamped with a destruction date (see Enclosure 1 for sample) as follows:

Lost foreign passports:

Dated June 1 - December 31, 1953	Stamp 59
Dated 1954	Stamp 60
Dated 1955	Stamp 61
Dated 1956	Stamp 62
Dated 1957	Stamp 63
Dated 1958	Stamp 64

Cards

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Cards of the types listed under e, g and i through m:

Dated June 1 - December 31, 1956	Stamp 59
Dated 1957	Stamp 60
Dated 1958	Stamp 61

D. Screening Indexes to Issued Immigrant Visas. The second step in developing the single 3 x 5 card file is screening the indexes to issued immigrant visas. All index cards to immigrant visas issued prior to February 1, 1957 shall be removed and destroyed. The balance shall be stamped with a destruction date as follows:

Dated February 1 - August 31, 1957	Stamp 59
Dated Sept. 1, 1957 - August 31, 1958	Stamp 60
Dated Sept. 1, 1958 - August 31, 1959	Stamp 61

After the index cards have been marked with the destruction date, they shall be interfiled with the screened lookout and refusal cards. Any post where, because of investigative requirements requiring analysis of old visa files for the tracing of family connections ("slots") or for other unusual reason is convinced that proper visa operations require longer retention of indexes to issued visa cards than is provided herein shall, before implementing this instruction and within ten working days of its receipt, report the full facts by operations memorandum headed: "Records Management". Copies of each such request shall be forwarded separately in envelopes marked: "Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, Executive Officer" and "Visa Office, Operations and Procedures Branch".

E. Screening of Indexes to NIV's and FS 257's. The third step is screening the index cards to nonimmigrant visas (prior to June 1957) and marking the balance of the cards and forms FS-257 with destruction dates. All indexes to nonimmigrant visas issued prior to December 28, 1952 shall be destroyed. Subsequent index cards to nonimmigrant visas (used prior to June 1957) and forms FS-257 shall be marked with destruction dates as follows:

Dated 1952	Stamp 60
Dated 1953	Stamp 61
Dated 1954	Stamp 62
Dated 1955	Stamp 63

Dated 1956

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Dated 1956

Stamp 64

Dated 1957

Stamp 65

Dated 1958

Stamp 66

Where an individual has had repeated visa services, only the latest index on FS-257 need be retained. In such case notations shall be made under "Remarks" on the reverse of FS-257 to indicate date, post number, if any, and classification of prior nonimmigrant visas within a period of ten years, the year dates of prior security checks within a period of ten years, the dates and places of revalidations or transfers effected outside the consular district within the past ten years. If the required notations cannot be coordinated conveniently on the FS-257, they may be placed on a 3 x 5 card to be stapled to it and to be attached to subsequent FS-257's retained in place of it.

Notices of revalidation and/or transfer of visas effected at other posts shall be noted on the FS-257 or index ^{card} covering the visa to which they refer and shall be destroyed.

After the cards have been marked with destruction dates and collated as indicated in the two preceding paragraphs, they shall be interfiled with the screened lookout and refusal cards and the indexes to issued immigrant visas.

F. Filing New Cards. New cards of the types listed in A above shall be interfiled as they are created and received by the file room. It should be the responsibility of the visa file supervisor to make certain that cards are properly marked with destruction dates (see next section).

G. Marking New Cards for Destruction. Cards being added to the 3 x 5 visa card file shall be marked with a large numeral showing year of destruction before filing. This shall be done as follows:

1. Refusals

- a. When visa has been refused on the basis of 212(a) 9, 10, 12, 17, 19, 22, 23, 27, 28 and 29

NO destruction date will be stamped on card.

- b. When a visa has been refused on other grounds, stamp the card as follows:

Refused in 1958

Stamp 61

Refused in 1959

Stamp 62

Refused

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Refused in 1960

Stamp 63

etc. etc. etc.

2. Index cards to issued, transferred or abandoned immigrant visas

Dated Sept. 1, 1957 - August 31, 1958

Stamp 60

Dated Sept. 1, 1958 - August 31, 1959

Stamp 61

Dated Sept. 1, 1959 - August 31, 1960

Stamp 62

etc. etc. etc.

3. Issued Forms FS-257

Issued in 1958

Stamp 66

Issued in 1959

Stamp 67

Issued in 1960

Stamp 68

etc. etc. etc.

4. Notices of transfers or revalidations of visas at other posts.
Note on Form FS-257 to which they relate and destroy.5. Forms I-191, Application for Border Crossing Card. Stamp to be
destroyed in the year following the seventieth birthday of the alien.

H. Future Removal and Destruction of Cards. Beginning in January 1959, all cards which bear the large numeral "59" are to be removed from the file and destroyed. In January 1960 those cards marked "60" will be destroyed. The practice is to be continued in similar fashion in ensuing years. Removal and destruction may be accomplished in one of two ways:

1. As new cards are filed or the file is used, cards may be removed whenever they are noticed, or

2. A systematic screening of the file from A to Z may be made.

In neither case will the cards need to be read since the destruction date was pre-determined at the time of filing.

I. Expansion Room in File Drawers. When consolidating the various card files into a single file, care should be taken to provide adequate room for

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anticipated normal expansion. Otherwise, frequent shiftings of the cards will become necessary. As a guide, it is suggested that approximately 8 inches expansion be left in drawers which are 24 inches long and 5 inches expansion in 15 inch drawers. Similar space should be left in equipment which may be of other dimensions.

J. Equipment.

1. Rubber Stamps

It will be necessary for posts to procure hand rubber stamps with which to stamp destruction dates on the cards. The numerals should be approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in height and similar to those shown in the examples in Enclosure 1. One set for the years 1959 through 1964 should be sufficient for most posts. These should be procured locally, if possible. Otherwise, they should be requisitioned in accordance with regular procedures.

2. Guide Cards

Guide cards properly spaced in the file drawers will greatly improve the efficiency of filing and finding operations. Card files may have too many as well as too few guides. Guide systems normally are made up in multiples of 100. It is recommended that there should be one guide for approximately every 40 cards or $\frac{1}{2}$ linear inch of cards. Thus, a file occupying 40 to 60 linear inches of space after screening and consolidation would require a 100-division guide. A file of 400 to 600 linear inches would require a 1000-division guide system. Because of the great use made of this 3 x 5 file only guide cards with celluloid reenforced tabs or of high grade pressboard should be purchased. Poorer grade stock will not withstand the constant usage that this file receives. Questions regarding the type and size of guide system to be used should be referred to the Department by OM, subject, RECORDS MANAGEMENT: Guide Cards for Visa Card File. Questions regarding the purchase of this equipment should be included in an OM, subject, SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT: Purchase of Guide Cards.

K. Date of Completion. Posts should attempt to complete the screening and consolidation of the files in accordance with the above instructions as soon as possible. Each post is requested to inform the Department when the project is completed.

L. Report on Cards Destroyed. A report on the volume in terms of linear inches of cards destroyed shall be made by OM, subject, RECORDS MANAGEMENT, upon completion of the project.

HERTER (ACTING)

Enclosure:

Sample Index Card and
Refusal Card.

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